



October 11, 2005

House Energy and Technology Committee
Lansing, Michigan

Re: Michigan Telecommunication Act

Dear Members,

The Michigan Environmental Council is a coalition of 71 environmental and public health groups located across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our thought on how the rewrite of the Michigan Telecommunication Act may affect Michigan's natural resources.

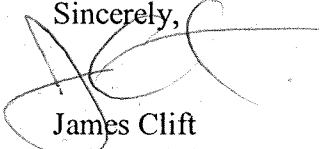
Our greatest concern is the impact that Section 252 may have on economic development efforts in rural and urban communities across the state. Section 252 would prohibit local units of government from offering high-speed and wireless Internet service to its residents. We believe such a restriction unduly ties the hands of local units of government trying to encourage redevelopment in their communities.

Some urban and older suburban communities view offering high-speed Internet service as a way to take advantage of their higher residential housing density and make leaving in Michigan more attract to young professionals. Whereas, some rural communities view it as a way to preserve their agricultural base by making it easier for rural residents to supplement their income and foster communications through the means of the Internet.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) noted in its recent rationale for a Statewide Rural Strategy that in rural communities' limited access to broadband infrastructure severely limits data/knowledge exchange with larger populations and business areas.

Global competition has placed greater and greater challenges on businesses, individuals and local units of government. We believe Section 252 places an unreasonable restriction on potential economic development in Michigan without justification. We urge committee members to strike out section 252 in the current legislation before moving the bill forward.

Sincerely,


James Clift
Policy Director

